

POISONOUS BITES & STINGS

Arizona Department of Corrections
Health Service Bureau

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In Arizona, there are many "critters" that can harm you if you are bitten or stung by them. The following safety tips may help you prevent a bite or sting.

- **Be alert when outdoors, especially in the warmer months and around water.**
- **Don't touch or play with wild animals or insects.**
- **Don't place your hands where you can not see.**
- **Check bedding, clothes and shoes before use.**
- **If possible, avoid all nests & hives.**
- **Wear shoes when outdoors.**
- **Be careful when lifting or moving things.**

Not all bites and stings can be avoided. So, it is important to know what animals and insects are dangerous and what to do if you are bitten or stung.

Bees, Ants & Wasps

If you are bitten or stung by one of these creatures, you will most likely experience minor swelling, redness, and itching that will go away in a few days. **However, some people may have more painful or serious symptoms including hives, itching, swelling (especially in the tongue), difficulty breathing, tightness in chest, a hoarse voice, and dizziness. If you experience any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately!**

Bark Scorpion

Of the many types of scorpions found in Arizona, only the bark scorpion is poisonous. The bark scorpion measures less than 2 inches and is tan or brown. **If stung by a scorpion, you may experience, great pain, numbness, tingling, visual disturbances, unusual eye movements, a swollen tongue, difficulty swallowing, slurred speech, muscle twitching, restlessness, irritability, and respiratory problems. You probably will not experience redness or swelling. If you are stung by a scorpion, seek medical attention immediately!**

Rattlesnakes

Rattlesnakes are very active from March through August. Rattlesnakes vary in color but will usually be tan or brown. The often make a rattling sound by their tails but may attack without noise. ***A rattlesnake bite will usually cause pain, burning, fang marks, a metal taste in the mouth, swelling, weakness, sweating, chills, nausea and vomiting. If you are bitten by a rattlesnake, DO NOT: Apply ice, cut off circulation by tying something around the site, cut the bite site, or suck out the venom. Do not try to capture the snake. Seek medical attention immediately.***

Gila Monsters

Gila Monsters are lizards that are about 2 feet long and weigh about 2 lbs. If a Gila Monster bites you, it may not let go. You may need someone to pull the Gila Monster off you. Gila Monsters will often be found in rocky desert areas. To avoid bites, do not touch or play with any lizards. ***Bites often cause intense pain, swelling, weakness, dizziness, nausea and chills. If you are bitten by a Gila Monster, seek medical attention immediately.***

Black Widow Spiders

Only female black widow bites are dangerous. They can be identified by a reddish hour glass found on her stomach. ***If bitten by a black widow spider, you may experience severe muscle pain (usually in the back and limbs) and a red circular mark at the bite site which may not show up for 6 hours. Seek medical attention if bitten by a black widow spider.***

Brown Recluse Spider

These spiders are brown with long legs & a violin-shaped marking on their head. Bites will not cause any pain for at least 4-8 hours. If you think you have been bitten by a brown recluse spider, seek medical attention immediately.

Other poisonous insects and animals exist. If you experience any of the signs or symptoms mentioned above after being bitten or stung, please seek medical attention.